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ERIN

VERSES

IRISH AND CATHOLIC



REV.^D MATTHEW RUSSELL, S. J.



11

11

ST. ANN HIGH SCHOOL

ERIN

Verses Irish and Catholic

BY THE

REV. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

AUTHOR OF "EMMANUEL" AND "MADONNA."

DUBLIN

M. H. GILL & SON, 50 UPPER SACKVILLE-ST.

1881

By the same Author.
Uniform with this Volume.

I.

EMMANUEL:
EUCCHARISTIC VERSES.

Sixth Edition.

II.

MADONNA:
VERSES ON OUR LADY AND THE SAINTS.

Second Edition.

K. 4189

TO

Miss Rosa Mulholland.

I place your name in front of this little volume, that each copy of it may be a token of my admiration for the genius to which we owe so many bright and pure books from "Dunmara" to "The Wild Birds of Killeevy."

If I had any misgiving that kinship or friendship could make me rate unduly your prose or your poetry, I should set my doubts at rest by recalling Charles Dickens' opinion of the one and Aubrey de Vere's opinion of the other. The most popular master of fiction showed his faith in your rare gifts as a writer of fiction by asking you to contribute the two-volume tale, "Hester's History," which brought to a close the first series of *All the Year Round*. The new series of that periodical contains your "Wicked Woods of Tobereevil," and many a lively or tender story besides. When a companion tale was needed for his "No Thoroughfare," in the Tauchnitz Edition, Dickens himself chose your "Late Miss Hollingford." German and French versions have made some of your writings better known abroad than at home; although in the process of translation much must needs have perished of the vividness, simplicity, delicacy, and self-restraint of a style which, with-

out a trace of affectation or mannerism, is as distinctly personal and as exquisite in its kind as Nathaniel Hawthorne's or Eugénie de Guérin's.

Yet, much as I esteem your prose—even (or perhaps especially) your picturesque and fanciful stories for children, such as "Puck and Blossom"—I look forward with still keener interest to the first collected edition of your poems, which are scattered over many Magazines from *The Cornhill* to *The Irish Monthly*. The last-named periodical could not have hoped to have its pages so often brightened by your name or your initials, if its editor had not the happiness of being your friend and almost brother.

M. R.

PREFACE.



It seems right to say that many of the following pieces date from even a more remote past than the contents of two small books of verse previously published. The subjects treated here are of a less sacred character than in "Emmanuel" or "Madonna," but not, it is hoped, unbecoming the pen of a *soggarth*: though, indeed, most of these things were written before that high title belonged to the writer. This is mentioned partly as an excuse, not so much for literary deficiencies as for a certain want of seriousness and reality in the allusions to Irish things. A priest, living among our good Catholic people and feeling the very beatings

of the Irish heart, would, if he were a poet, have at his command many a theme fit to inspire true and noble poetry. The verses here collected were written in quite different circumstances, and with a much lower aim and scope.

The wonderful kindness this little series has met with, not only from our convents and priests and people at home, but also in the United States, and even from English literary journals, like the *Spectator* or the *Academy*—this warm appreciation has been a very great and very pleasant surprise. May the reception awaiting these IRISH AND CATHOLIC VERSES excite, not as much surprise—which past kindness has made impossible—but as much pleasure and as much gratitude.

St. Francis Xavier's, Dublin,
Christmas, 1880.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Dedication	3
Preface	5
The Irish Farmer's Sunday Morning	9
To C. W. R. on reading a page of Cardinal Newman's "Apologia"	21
In Memory of Dr. Russell of Maynooth	27
A Picnic at Rostrevor	30
The First Redbreast	35
The Yarra-Yarra Unvisited	38
Prayer or Poem?	43
The Allo Unvisited	46
Down by the Dodder	49
Cockcrow in France	53
The Irish Children's First Communion:	
Part I. The Catechism Class	54
Part II. Annie	60
Part III. The Great Day	65
To Three Young Missionaries setting out for China	72
The Dead	73
A Protest	74
"Pray for A. L."	75
A Birthday in Religion	76
The First Sin	79
A Rose and a Rosebud	81
A Farewell	83
Our Midnight Mass	85

	PAGE
The Poor Man's Knock	89
The Little Flower Strewers	91
Flowers for the Children's Hospital	93
"Rear Her for the Sacred Heart"	96
Norah's Birthday	97
Mottoes	99
Daisy's Anniversary	101
Monotony and the Lark	102
To T. D. Sullivan, on reading his "Plea for the Song- Birds"	105
The Sleepy Carthusian	106
A Miracle of St. Aloysius	108
The Old Spot	109

VERSES

IRISH AND CATHOLIC.



THE IRISH FARMER'S SUNDAY MORNING

THROUGH breast of careworn mortal rarely darts
More keen delight than honest peasant knows
When out of slumbers long and deep he starts,
And thinks "'tis Sunday!" and his fancy goes
Sporting amid the restful hours, and shows
His one whole day for ease and chatting friends,
Himself refulgent in his Sunday clothes ;
While a vague sadness with his rapture blends—
The Sunday's come ; but soon, too soon, the Sunday
ends !

To-day no need to start at chilly dawn,
Or drudge the misty, hungry morning through.
Sleep, honest soul ! you're weary still—sleep on,
Since God ordains, less for Himself than you,

That man shall 'neath this sun no labour do
And yet, betimes, into the moist, raw air,
Some needful Sunday duties to pursue,
Noiseless he sallies forth with tiptoe care,
Lest his stout tramp disturb the dear ones sleeping
there.

The mother slumbers on : for she had toiled
Till it was almost Sunday, striving hard
That in her children's garb should nothing soiled
Or torn appear. Vain effort, rudely marred
Ere half the day be done, though pious ward
Is by the elder sister kept o'er all—
So matronly and of so grave regard.
Ah! many a bramble, many a leap and fall
Await those Sunday clothes now hanging on the
wall.

The breakfast ready, what a welcome beams
On every well-washed face, that looks its best,
While from the brownest crockery up steams
That beverage which of its magic zest
The disenchanter Use can ne'er divest ;
But here, reserved for feasts and Sunday morns,
It comes a ten-times honoured, welcomed guest.
Simple their fare beside : yet whoso scorns
Knows not how rich the board that hale content
adorns.

Before the sire an egg, one only, lies,
Laid by as good a duck as ever swam ;*
Whereof the top, removed 'neath wistful eyes,
Regales his little pet, his youngest lamb—
Her with the flaxen curls and eyes so calm.
Before the sire the loaf-bread, † too, is laid
To be dispensed in slices thin, like ham :
For it, alas ! the hard-earned pence were paid ;
The gulf still left is filled with coarser sort, home-
made.

Now clattering cups and crunching teeth give o'er,
And all consent to sign a truce at last ;
Albeit Tom thinks he could do something more,
And Bess and Mary at the teapot cast
Glances not quite indifferent. But fast
All hurry off, their toilets to complete ;
For easy undress graced their brisk repast.
Had they sat down elaborately neat,
Their work had been performed less freely and less
fleet.

Then was there brushing in hot haste ; the vest,
Tight-fitting jacket, pants of royal cord
Are burnished up with zeal that knows no rest
Till industry has met its due reward :

* Duck's eggs commend themselves more to the rustic palate than eggs of milder flavour.

† As contra-distinguished from griddle-bread.

For when did frameless looking-glass afford
Glimpse of more brilliantly apparelled boy?
Ah, may no rent or accident untoward
His elegant placidity alloy,
Enshrined in stoutest frieze and roughest corduroy.

With face washed spotless—ah, laborious task—
And chin close-shorn blocked up in starchèd snow,
The “good man” of the house his boy doth ask
If they at last are ready. “Come, let’s go:
No time to lose”—though well the rogue doth
know
They really have ample time to spare.
The lads, however, no reluctance show—
An hour too soon is neither here nor there,
While folk have tongues to wag and eyes to wink an
stare.

Meanwhile the eldest sister scrubs amain
With tender roughness at the younger fry,
Achieving cleanliness with trifling pain
When soap invades the incautious half-closed eye.
May God be blessed, with all my soul I cry,
For giving elder sisters! Who as they
Can soothe and chide us, guard and purify,
Discreetly scold, and then, good-humoured play,
Mother and sister both, so grave and yet so gay

At length the mother issues forth arrayed
 In all her splendour—for the sun shines bright—
 Grumbling benignly that she is delayed
 By her two youngest, not yet wholly “right.”
 But now they beam before her, and delight
 The mother’s heart with prettiness sedate.
 Off hand in hand they set, a touching sight;
 While she, half angry, cries, as clinks the gate,
 “Mind, ’tis the curate’s day—I’ll lay my life you’re
 late.”

Ah! ma’am, take care lest thou thyself to-day
 Be later still: for lo! before thee there
 Two of thy cronies loiter by the way.
 Come, hasten on, their converse sweet to share,
 First having marked what sort of gown they wear.
 And then the three discourse of auld lang syne,
 The hardships which e’en thrifty housewives bear—
 The measles’ ravages ’midst babes and swine,
 The price of tea, the health of horses, husbands,
 kine.

The hedge-rows green now bursting out in song—
 The fields that team with blossomed stalks or
 corn—
 The sights, sounds, scents, the summer air that
 throng—
 All voiceless cry, “This, this is Sunday morn!”

Oh, on this day of graces do not scorn
Your neighbour yonder with the shabby cloak,
Whose little girl's best frock is patched and
worn—

Once rich as you, till pestilential stroke
Smote three fine cows ; and then the husband's spirit
broke.

Our honest friend thus chats away, and eyes
The groups that pass. But who's that maiden tall
Shining in muslin of the gayest dyes ?

“ Why that's my Mary, bravest of them all !”
Then doth she with meek pride her daughter call,
On whose young cheek an artless blush is raised,
Oh ! may no darker shadow ever fall.

Pure soul, the love wherewith the angels gazed
Upon her then shall last for ever, God be praised !

Thicker the pilgrim bands now throng the road ;
And see, it peers from out yon clump of trees,
The whitewashed chapel. Ah ! too mean abode
To lodge the King of Ages, who yet sees
More 'neath that lowly roof his heart to please
Than greets his eye in vast cathedral fane.
From pomp and pride the Lord of Glory flees,
Whilst 'midst the simple-hearted, poor and plain,
With a peculiar joy his Spirit doth remain.

Around the churchyard-gate a buzzing crowd.
 Wouldst learn the theme that stirreth every
 tongue?

It is the question roared so oft aloud,
 Whispered so oft men's eager throngs among,
 As if the noblest ever said or sung—
 O'er which in every rank and clime men gloat—
 Which on men's lips for ages must have hung
 Ere spake Demosthenes,* ere Horace wrote :
 "Tell me, I prithee tell, the newest thing afloat?"

The reverend patriarchs, throned on yonder wall,
 With ardour keen their last debate renew
 Upon the great world's politics, and all
 The current wars and markets : though 'tis true
 Their facts are stale, apocryphal, and few,
 Their judgments wrong, predictions false no doubt;
 And, like to councils of more weight which you
 And I could name, they'd make more modest rout,
 Knew they a little more of what they talk about.

Where are the boys? My muse is grieved to tell
 That some are "pitching buttons" at their ease,
 Screened by the alders round a neighbouring well ;
 While others these expectant moments seize

* Βούλεσθε. . . . πυνθάνεσθαι κατά τήν ἄγοραν, λέγεται τὸ
 καινόν; Demosthenes, I. Philip. *circa init.*

To hurl the "shoulder-stone." More staid than
these,
A few aspire to join the gaping crowd
Who listen while, with mystic cough and sneeze,
The "Master" reads, bespectacled, aloud
A journal nine days old, with whine serenely proud.

Nor deem that all the parish in the sun
Their Sunday legs are idly dangling here.
The women all, and all the males who've won
Repute of sanctity, and those who fear
The threatening rain, their course directly steer
To where the drone of this most saintly hive,
A learned tailor, chants forth bold and clear
The rosary-prayers, while ancient matrons strive
With zealous haste for one shrill decade of the
five.

What bodes that lull among the herd profane
Out in the grassy churchyard congregate?
At last the priest glides through the narrow lane
Of bowing heads with grave, paternal state.
The good old man hastes not, though very late,
But has his joke for some, his smile for all,
Heedless of those who long impatient wait
Round the small room behind the altar wall
Which serves as sacristy, parlour, confessional.

And now each seeks his place within the pile
'Mid the last warnings of yon tongue of brass,
Which from aloft screams round o'er half a mile,
"The priest is here—O come, O come to Mass!"
Those strains, I ween, in angel's thoughts surpass
Viol and harp, and e'en in carnal ears
Sound less discordant than that hymn, alas!
Now bellowed forth as if each singer fears
His part's unheard. But hush! the vested priest
appears.

Before him strut two chubby surpliced boys :
One rings a bell with somewhat pompous skill,
If skilful ringing aim at making noise ;
The other looks and listens, pleased but ill—
Well, never mind, when *his* turn comes, he will
Beat Tommy's ringing hollow. Then the pair
Kneel with crossed hands and eyes half-closed, yet
still,
While watching for *Amen*, they've time to spare
For sidelong peeps to note their comrades' envious
stare.

The Acts of sorrow, faith, hope, love are read ;
The Holy Water sheds its cleansing shower ;
All rise, and Mary's Angelus is said,
And then begins the rite of mystic power.

What portents crowd that quiet happy hour!
 The tide of grace swells high in many a heart
 Which of simplicity hath ample dower,
 Lending it strength to bear the worrying smart
 Of all the toils and cares that form a poor man's
 part.

The maid that hath with letters tinctured been
 Her prayer-book doth with holy face peruse.
 Conscious the while she prayeth not unseen—
 Well, let him watch her praying if he choose:
 Her lips move none the less for that. Ah! Suse,
 Are not you thinking how, ere months be flown,
 The parish may be startled by the news:
 "You've heard the wedding?" "That I long
 have known—
 A decent boy but not too good for Susie Sloan."

Then, this distraction slowly thrust aside,
 With graver piety her prayers she reads;
 While some, less learned, survey take more wide,
 Consulting duly for the spirit's needs
 By fingering audibly their huge black beads.
 The good old crones close to the altar kneel
 In glaring cotton or in sober weeds,
 While vigorous sighs and motions quaint reveal
 Not more devotion than their simple bosoms feel.

Beseems it not in such rude, playful strain,
 To dare aught more than meekly bow the head
 In hush of soul as chimes that bell again
 To tell the sacrifice is midway sped.
 He who will judge the living and the dead
 Steals hither now in less terrific form
 As if his low-born love disguised to wed,
 Nor yet unloved, unworshipped. Hark! the
 storm*

Of stifled sighs that burst from hearts unstained and
 warm.

But now no more : though more, much more is said,
 And thought and done, the muse might not dis-
 own,
 But ah ! for me those pastoral days are fled,
 And 'mid the garish streets my lot is thrown.
 For fields and flowers and waves I trust alone
 To Memory, garrulous, half-welcome guest,
 That chatters gaily lest the door be shown.
 Call upon her and Fancy for the rest,
 Or mark such scenes yet found in Erin, poor but
 blest.

* "The long wave yearns along the coast
 With sob suppressed, like that which thrills
 (While o'er the altar mounts the Host)
 Some chapel on the Irish hills."

Aubrey de Vere.

O Erin ! O my mother ! fondest child
Of our own Mother, Queen of earth and heaven—
Truest to her, who, while on earth exiled,
Has been to us as nursing mother given.
May ne'er thy chain of Roman faith be riven !
And from her throne celestial may our Queen,
On one sweet morn out of each weary seven,
Gaze down with joy on many a holy scene
Like that I've sung with more of truth than skill,
I ween.

TO C. W. R.

ON READING A CERTAIN PAGE* OF THE "APOLOGIA."

AGAIN betrayed! Another of thy deeds,
 Performed by stealth to help a brother's needs,
 Divulged by happy accident at last.
 Not listlessly thy tranquil years have passed,
 But with a placid energy to dare
 All that thy well-trained strength could do—whate'er
 Might serve God's glory in thy time and place.
 Yet keen thy glance that aim divine to trace
 In humblest fellow-creature's humblest good:
 Work for the toiler—for the hungry, food.

* "My dear friend, Dr. Russell, the present President of Maynooth, had perhaps more to do with my conversion than anyone else. He called upon me in passing through Oxford in the summer of 1841. . . . I do not recollect that he said a word on the subject of religion. He sent me at different times several letters; he was always gentle, mild, unobtrusive, uncontroverted. He let me alone."

In the original edition of the "*Apologia pro Vita Sua*" these words are found at page 317, which corresponds with page 197 of the later form of that work called "The History of my Religious Opinions." The passage is given also at page 52 of "Characteristics of John Henry Newman." These lines were at once prompted by the delighted surprise which I felt in reading the foregoing passage, not having heard from Dr. Russell anything about his close connection with Cardinal Newman, either in our private conversations or in his class of ecclesiastical history, though I was a member of it while he treated of the Oxford movement.

If thou but learn where merit suffers need,
 Word of encouragement and generous deed
 Are sure to come. From learned toil or play
 To weep with those who weep thou turn'st away.
 And as the eye—yes, in our measure we
 Must Him resemble who hath deigned to be
 Our Father—as that eye, which guides the race
 Of star and comet over lonely space,
 Marks every flutter of the tiniest wren :
 So from plain Duty's pettiest task thy ken
 With earnest sympathy can range apart
 Through all that thrills or pains the world's great
 heart.

But God's own word that order has assigned
 Which guides us best in working for our kind :
 " Chiefly for those at home, by faith and blood
 Thy kin,"* thou livest. Whatsoe'er of good
 Thou canst—or others, moved by thee—thou dost,
 Hast done, wilt do, through lengthened years, I trust,
 For this dear land, for holy Faith and Truth,
 And Her, till now unnamed in song—Maynooth.
 Maynooth, unhallowed yet by hoary hair,
 Mother of myriad souls ! lo, by her care
 The faith of Peter and of Patrick sown
 In distant regions, fostered in her own.

* "Maximé domesticorum fidei." Gal. vi. 10.

May true apostles, trained by her, each year
Speed on their glorious mission far and near,
To waft abroad, at home to guard from taint
The faith that made this land the martyr-saint
Of Christian lands, the suffering Holy Isle
Which greener from the stormy waves doth smile—
To feed the love our Erin eye displayed
For Jesus' Mother, that each Celtic maid
May smile in virgin dignity and be
What generous strangers have rejoiced to see
In the poor homesteads of our scattered race—
Rich in God's gifts of purity and grace.
With these three names, names prized in heaven at
least—
Maynooth, the Irish race, the Irish priest—
Long with these names close linked shall be thy
name,
And grateful blessings shall thy memory claim.

"Uncontroversial, unobtrusive, mild"—
Gentle, unselfish, simple as a child.
True cheerfulness from serious thought has birth,
Natures the gravest bend to gayest mirth.
Courteous alike to menial and to peer,
Kindest of hearts to those who see thee near,
Though some might deem thee from afar austere.*

* "Il n'y a que les personnes qui ont de la fermeté qui puissent avoir une véritable douceur. Celles qui paraissent douces n'ont d'ordinaire que de

My courage fails me when I fain would paint
 A nineteenth-century gentlemanly saint.
 True sanctity respects the *where* and *when*—
 The saints of God are truly gentle men.
 This purse-proud age, with its galvanic heat,
 Votes many of God's wonders obsolete,
 And from the noon-day glare smiles back, with scorn
 Coldly benignant, at the dewy morn
 Of Christendom—if all this garish light
 Be noon, indeed, and not mere gaslit night.
 Yet God is still of his poor earth the Lord—
 True progress with his law must still accord.

Stay! such grave fancies misbeseem my strain—
 I read the Oratorian's page again,
 And marvel how in all those years no word
 To such noteworthy incident referred,
 Though oft the easy context of discourse
 From lips least egotistical might force
 Some tiny crumb of personal anecdote,
 A "*Thus I heard him say,*" or "*Once he wrote.*"

la faiblesse qui se convertit aisément en aigreur." After Rochefoucauld
 let me cite Tennyson ;—

"Such fine reserve and noble reticence,
 Manners so kind but stately, such a grace
 Of tenderest courtesy—that gentleness
 Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man."

I have often applied to the subject of these lines this phrase from Tacitus :
 "Neque illi (quod est rarissimum) aut facilitas auctoritatem aut severitas
 amorem diminuit."

And what high privilege, dear Friend, was thine,
 Guiding Faith's pilgrim to her one true shrine!
 Pilgrim far-famed, in whom God deigned to see
 Fit instrument for work sublime—to be
 For many in our day and through all days
 Himself a guide from out the dreary maze
 Of error and half-truth and crumbling creeds—
 Himself a "Note" for all whom candour leads,
 Not such as he grope blindly in God's sight
 From light to darkness, but from dark to light,
 When helped by such as thou. Had he not all
 The faculties, the graces which might call
 God's blessing on his painful years of thought
 And prayer and study? Found he what he sought?
 Happy who have so much to sacrifice,
 Happy who buy the pearl at such a price!
 Rare intellect, rich culture, marvellous pen,
 A gently potent sway o'er thinking men—
 Humble and pure, his tale proclaims anew,
 "The clean of heart have eyes to see the True."*

He pays thee tribute thou wouldst fain forbid.
 Blessed are they whose best from men is hid.
 Oh! that the vain and selfish understood,
 Like thee, "the luxury of doing good,"†

* "Beati mundo corde quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt."

† Even during the few days of illness which closed his life, after having, at his own suggestion, received the Last Sacraments, he did what he had

And how its zest is ne'er so exquisite
 As when the All-seeing only seeth it.
 The flower, the stream, the prayer, in secret springs—
 God loves, as thou, the "silence of good things."*
 The ways of God are surely not men's ways.
 And what of all those years of studious days
 Which e'en Liguori's vow,† from boyhood till
 This reverend age, could scarce more richly fill?
 The self-denying, conscientious toils
 That have amassed of many climes the spoils;
 Not the harsh pedant's ill-assorted store—
 Here learning's purest and most copious ore
 Is in the crucible of thought refined,
 Poured through a style as limpid as thy mind.
 These, God be thanked, reap harvest scant of fame,
 Though many love and more respect thy name.
 So be it to the end! So shall the Lord
 Reproach thee not: "Thou hadst thy due reward."
 Praise from a Newman's lips must needs be rare.
 May those thou servest heed thy wish, and spare
 The pang of such revealings here, that they
 May take us unawares upon the Accounting Day.

been always doing—striving, for instance, to further the interests of more than one young man who had applied to him for counsel and help, ignorant as they were that his career of laborious and unselfish zeal and benevolence was very near to its end.

* Jean Reboul, the baker poet of Nîmes.

† St. Alphonsus Liguori made a vow not to waste a moment of his time.

IN MEMORIAM C. W. R.*

Pray for the soul of Charles William Russell, D.D., President of Maynooth College (1857-1880), who died, February 26th, 1880, in the 68th year of his age, and the 45th year of his priesthood.—*Mortuary Card.*

OUR tongues are loosed, for thou art dead !
 Our hearts may utter what they feel.
 We dared not, till thy spirit fled,
 Our worship and our love reveal.

But God has ended thy long pain,
 Thy term of forced repose is run.
 Kind friends to keep thee strove in vain—
 God's will be done, God's will be done !

His gracious will had struck thee down
 While fruitfulest thy labours seemed ;
 For God would finish *thus* thy crown,
 And not as proud affection dreamed.

We dreamed thy ripened wisdom still
 Might train the *soggarths* of our race ;
 And that thy reverend form might fill
 For many a year its lofty place ;

* Though these lines are prefixed as a second dedication to my "Madonna," their natural place is here after the preceding poem. No other repetition occurs in the series of books of verse, of which this is the third.

That thou wouldst spend thyself still more
In serving all, thy aid who sought,
And using well the treasured lore
By many a studious vigil bought.

But suddenly thy course is checked,
Thy hand its toils reluctant stays ;
And many a hope and plan are wrecked,
'Mid sleepless nights and workless days.

Three patient years of painful rest
Ere yet the generous heart grew still.
We wanted thee—but God knows best,
And welcome be his holy will !

He would thy meek endurance prove,
And so He willed thee long to be
The grateful object of that love
Two kindred hearts poured out on thee.

Two faithful wedded hearts as pure,
As rich, as noble as thy own—
(He will remember you, be sure,
Dear friends, before the great white Throne).

Farewell ! Thy strong and tender heart,
Thy earnest will, thy spacious mind,
Had well and fully played their part,
Though more, we thought, remained behind.

Much do we know, yet little know
Of all the worth that filled thy days ;
For thy fine nature hated show,
Did good by stealth, and shrank from praise.

In spheres of duty wide apart,
Thy calm, unresting zeal found scope ;
Of many a home and many a heart
The comfort thou and stay and hope.

Yet none of those who prized thee best,
To pain thee with their praise might dare ;
And hearts with gratitude oppressed
Could only whisper it in prayer.

But thou art gone! And *now* we may,
Unhidden, all our love proclaim,
And vow, whilst we behind thee stay,
To honour and to bless thy name.

Farewell! Whate'er the future brings
To us—no longer by thy side—
'Twill urge us on to higher things
To think that thou hast lived and died.

A PICNIC AT ROSTREVOR.

It lies 'twixt the sea and the mountain,
 Or rather the bay and the hill,
 Which cool the warm breath of the summer,
 And take from the winter its chill.
 It nestles 'mid oak-trees and beeches
 That stretch their green arms o'er the street,
 Whose breadth, to its length nearly equal,
 Expands where the four roadways meet.
 As you wind by the bay's breezy margin,
 Rostrevor you mark from afar,
 Betrayed by its spire of Our Lady's,
 And joyful you cry : " Here we are !"—
 Betrayed by its spire gleaming brightly
 High o'er its embowering trees :
 As the breath of the sea is detected
 In this bracing and life-giving breeze.
 That white granite spire of Our Lady's
 On the oaks and the beeches looks down,
 And it cries up to heaven for a blessing
 On the simple Arcadian town.
 A blessing in sooth is the convent
 That hides in the shadow serene
 Of that beautiful Church of Our Lady,
 Of Mary our Mother and Queen.

The convent and church crown the village
 Which clusters in peace at their feet ;
 A stream from the hills saunters past it,
 Reluctant to leave scene so sweet.
 Dark stream where the branches hang thickly,
 Bright stream where the sun pierces through ;
 'Tis shallow, yet keeps a broad channel—
 Who knows what the winter may do ?
 A bridge takes you over this river
 Which dreamily murmurs along,
 Too lazy to wet all its pebbles,
 Too lazy for ripple or song.
 You then, 'neath the long, leafy branches
 Interlacing o'erhead, wend your way,
 Near plashing of waves on the shingle,
 Towards the mouth of the mountain-locked bay.
 And soon on your left you will notice
 The Woodside Hotel at the quay—
 (This rhyme is pronounced as if rhyming
 With not very distant Crock Shee,*
 Though personal taste would incline me
 To go for a rhyme to Mill bay ;
 But Walker and Worcester and Webster
 Conspire to point t'other way.)

Further on, the road glides through a forest
 Which covers the mountain's steep side—

* Phonetic spelling for Croagh Sidhe, the Fairies' Mountain.

Green leaves all around you, above you,
 Down, down to the brink of the tide.
 And here, where the Wood House lies hidden,
 A path tempts you up through the trees—
 But first let me risk a suggestion
 You're free to reject if you please.
 This climbing of mountains is pleasant
 For lads loose from schoolroom and desk ;
 But a well-furnished hamper enhances
 The beauty of scenes picturesque.
 Without a fat hamper ascend not !
 We're made of both body and soul ;
 Ev'n poets can't do without dinner,
 And maybe 'tis best on the whole.
 So take turn about with the hamper,
 And, crawling zigzag, scale the steep ;
 Puff, pant, and perspire towards the summit,
 Disturbing the mountaineer sheep.
 These, wiry and hardy and agile,
 Climb mountains more deftly than you
 Who frequently find it expedient
 To pause and look back at the view.

Come, rest in the shade of this boulder,
 Called truly in Irish Clough More,*
 Once hurled o'er the lough by the giant
 Who fought from the southern shore.

* Big stone.

You see where the Carlingford giant
Lies under yon mountain-ridge high—
In outline his figure recumbent
Is traced clear against the blue sky.
Here, too, you observe how his fingers
Sank deep in this wonderful stone—
But now peradventure your hunger
Sufficiently wolfish hath grown.
Clough More shall behold a new battle;
Here pitch we our camp for a halt.
Be hampers unpacked! Where's the corkscrew?
I fear we've forgotten the salt.
With eating and laughing and quaffing,
Uncounted the sunny hours pass,
Where the bottles of many a picnic
Are strewn o'er the crisp, trodden grass.

Awaiting dessert, you have leisure
To bend your rapt gaze on the scene—
These parallel ranges of mountain,
The salt waves that sparkle between,
The white sails that speckle those waters,
The cornfields that speckle the side
Of yon mountain, repulsing the heather
Far up from the marge of the tide.
Where the mountains slope downward and inland,
And melt in blue distance away,

The stout Frontier-town of old Newry
Keeps guard at the head of the bay.
God bless the good town and each homestead
That peoples this ocean-lake's shore,
All round from the Hill of the Violets
To the lighthouse that faces Greenore!

In yonder must lie Narrow Water,
Where smoke-wreaths from Warrenpoint town
Curl upward beyond this rich woodland
Of green, patched with yellow and brown.
How white wind the roads down beneath us!
Ev'n dust at this distance looks nice!
'Tis well to commune thus with Nature—
(Oh! thank you, just give me one slice).

At last we hie homeward. The journey
Down hill through the crags and the trees
(The freight of the hamper stowed elsewhere)
Is made with comparative ease.
How swift, how unheeded the swiftness
Of the last downhill stage of life's way!
How pleasant is home to the weary!
In heav'n may we feel it one day!

But ah! though the charms I have chanted
Have dear to my memory grown,
I think of thee more, O Rostrevor!
Because thou art near to Killowen.

THE FIRST REDBREAST :

A LEGEND OF GOOD FRIDAY.

A **QUAINT** and childish story, often told,
 And worth, perchance, the telling, for it steals
 Through rustic Christendom ; and boyhood, bold
 And almost pitiless in pastime,* feels
 The lesson its simplicity conceals.
 Hence kind Tradition, to protect from wrong
 A gentle tribe of choristers, appeals
 To this ancestral sacredness, so long
 In grateful memory shrined, and now in grateful
 song.

One Friday's noon a snowy-breasted bird
 Was flying in the darkness o'er a steep
 Nigh to Judea's capital, where stirred
 The rabble's murmur sullenly and deep.
 Far had it sailed since sunrise, and the sweep
 Of its brown wing grew languid, and it longed
 To rest awhile on some green bough, and peep
 Around the mass that on the hill-side thronged,
 As if to learn whereto such pageant stern belonged.

* Un fripon d' enfant (cet âge est sans pitié).—*La Fontaine*.

The robin whitebreast spied a Cross of wood
That lifted o'er the din its gory freight.
Beneath, the sorrow-stricken Mother stood,
And silent wailed her Child's less cruel fate.
But lest she mourn all lone and desolate,
Has reason whispered to that fluttering breast,
Whom, Whom, on Whom those fiends their fury
sate ?

Mark how it throbs with pity, nor can rest,
Till it has freed its Lord, or tried its little best.

And see, with tiny beak it fiercely flies,
To wrench the nails that bind the Captive fast.
Ah ! vain, all vain those eager panting cries,
That quivering agony ! It sinks at last,
Foiled in the generous strife and glares aghast
To see the thorn-crowned Head droop faint and
low,
Mute the pale lips, the gracious brow o'er cast ;
While from the shattered palms the red drops flow,
Staining the pious bird's smooth breast of speckless
snow.

That snow thus ruddied fixed the tinge of all
The after-race of robins ; and 'tis said,
Heaven's fondest care doth on the robin fall,
In memory of that scene on Calvary sped.

Hence, urchins rude, in quest of plunder led
To prowl round hedges, never dare to touch
The wee white-speckled eggs or mossy bed
Of "God's own bird." So from the spoiler's
clutch
Would you, God's child, be free? Ah! feel for
Jesus much.

THE YARRA-YARRA UNVISITED.

WRITTEN IN AN AUSTRALIAN ALBUM ON ITS HOME TOUR.

NE'ER have I rambled on its marge,
 Ne'er angled 'mid its willows;
 I ne'er have sailed in skiff or barge
 Upon its languid billows.
 Yet will I sing—as Callanan
 Once sang of Gougane Barra—
 Yet will I sing as best I can
 The lazy, winding Yarra.

Ah! many a day of weary toil
 And much privation well borne
 Have served to tame the rampant soil
 And raise this rising Melbourne.
 Some forty years ago a wild
 As lonely as Sahara—
 Now rife with life and trade's keen strife,
 Just at the mouth of Yarra.

It creeps between high wooded sides,
 And ere it reach the city
 Past holy Abbotsford it glides—
 To which it owes this ditty.

For in Australian album, why
 Waste praise on Connemara?
 Thy heart's in Abbotsford, and I
 Will praise its Yarra-Yarra.

The friend whose friendship gave me thine,
 With kindness past all telling,
 Pursues me since the "auld lang syne,"
 When first with him I fell in.
 Ah! while we watched the summer tide
 Lap thy gray rocks, Kinvara,
 We recked not that o'er oceans wide
 He'd fly to Yarra-Yarra!

He tells me that the sky above
 Is bluer far and brighter
 Than that which spans the Isle we love;
 The air is warmer, lighter.
 Gay flowers along the margin float,
 And many an *avis rara*,
 Of brilliant plume, but tuneless throat,*
 Skims o'er the sparkling Yarra.

*The friend referred to contradicts this common statement about the tunelessness of Australian birds. The following passage from a speech of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, formerly Premier of Victoria, is, perhaps, more interesting than apposite: "There are here all the conditions of a happy and prosperous country, if we agree to enjoy its blessings in peace and good fellowship. The sun in his circuit does not look on a land where individual and public liberty are more secure; where industry has a more sure reward; where a wider career is open to capacity and integrity; or

When shall I breathe that purer air ?
 Quite lately I have had some
 Fair chance of being summoned there—
 If summoned, *ecce adsum !*
 The motto of our Bedford race
 Is this: *Che sara sara.*
 (The accent slightly I misplace,
 To coax a rhyme for Yarra.)

More musical than new Adare
 Its olden name Athdara,
 And Tennyson's meek Lady Clare
 Grows statelier as Clara.
 Had not my Muse such gems to spare
 For gemming thy tiara,
 She would not waste a double share
 On this one stanza, Yarra !

There is not unity of theme,
 I grant it, in these stanzas ;
 The subjects as far sundered seem
 As Kensington and Kansas.

where more genial skies spread health and pleasure. We have all the elements of a great nation in the seed. I may apply to all Australia the graphic language of one of my friends : ' We have more Saxons on this continent than King Arthur had when he founded the realm of England ; we have more Celts than King Brian had when he drove the Danes into the surges at Clontarf ; we have more Normans than followed William the Conqueror to Hastings ; and to fuse these into a nation, it only needs the honest adoption of the sentiment that we are all one Australian people.' "

'Twere better if in graceful round
My thoughts could move—but arrah!
What can a poet do, who's bound
To close each verse with Yarra?

And notice here, our rhythmic chords
Are strict in orthodoxy,
Nor do they force two little words
For one to act as proxy.
An article to harshly treat
(As in this line) would mar a
Most conscientious rhyming feat
Achieved to honour Yarra.

But now, at last, we must give o'er
With our Wordsworthian* sapphic,
Though sundry rhymes remain in store,
Historic, topographic,
Like those we've hitherto impressed,
As Lara and Bokhara,
Carrara, Marat, and the rest;
But how link these with Yarra?

* See Wordsworth's "Yarrow Unvisited," "Visited," and "Revisited."
The title of this poem and of the next but one was of course suggested by
the first of this exquisite trio.

My trickling thread of metre wells
As if 'twould well for ever :
So mountain streamlet swells and swells
Into a stream, a river.
But now my harp as mute must grow
As that which hangs at Tara.
Farewell, dear Maid from Bendigo !
Farewell, O Yarra-Yarra.

PRAYER OR POEM ?

ANOTHER PAGE FROM AN AUSTRALIAN ALBUM.

ON this leaflet's stainless white
 Prayer or poem shall I write ?
 Ere I write, I've dared to look
 Through and through thy tiny book—
 Prayer and poem everywhere !
 Shall *my* page be song or prayer ?
 Let me double tribute bring,
 Praying for thee while I sing.
 May thy life-stream glide along,
 Chiming soft a holy song—
 Free from sin and free from care,
 Half a poem, half a prayer !

Irish both in heart and name,
 Her as all our own we claim.
 Irish both in name and heart,
 Yet may Scotland claim a part.
 Holyrood and Abbotsford
 Touch her bosom's tenderest chord.
 "Twenty golden years ago"—
 (Youth dreads not such dates, you know)—
 On one crisp October morn
 Holyrood saw Polly born.

There she drew her earliest breath;
And her latest shall, she saith,
Waft her soul from Abbotsford—
Waft it surely heavenward.
Not indeed that pilgrim spot
Glorified by Walter Scott,
But a holy convent home,
Far away o'er ocean foam,
Where (like heaven itself) are blent
Innocent and penitent,
Serving Him the Shepherd Good
Who his life on Holy Rood
Gave for us his wandering sheep.
May He in his bosom keep,
Safe and happy, pure and calm,
One beloved gentle lamb!

But my trickling thoughts have flowed
Into quite a birthday ode;
Fewer words had better shed
Kindest blessings on thy head.
Oft indeed our hearts shall pray
"God bless her that's far away!"
Nor must thou forget us quite
When poor Erin fades from sight,
As thy bark, too swift, too gay,
Bounds upon her homeward way
O'er the oceans vast that flow
'Twixt Benburb and Bendigo.

Yet those climes less distant are,
Exile seems less stern by far,
Since we see that *there* bloom flowers
Just as fair and sweet as ours,
But what matter where we spend
These few moments till life's end ?
Let no spot through which we roam
Bind our hearts as in their home.
'Tis at best a lodging given,
Station on the road to Heaven.
When the toilsome road is past,
Heaven will be our home at last.

That thy bard may meet thee there,
Breathe, kind pilgrim, many a prayer.

THE ALLO UNVISITED.

AN Irishman, I love the fair
 And fruitful land that bore me.
 (O'Connell, you're no doubt aware,
 Made this remark before me.)*
 I love dear Erin's vales and hills,
 Her tillage-land and fallow ;
 I love her rivers and her rills,
 And thus I love the Allo.

Thus only ; for I must avow
 'Tis but by name I know it.
 Its name has more than once ere now
 Slid from the pen of poet.
 The Laureate of the Fairy Queen
 Erst tarried near Duhallow,
 And oft he traced thy margin green,
 Broadwater, *alias* Allo !†

* In beginning his speech in the debate on the Repeal of the Union, in the Dublin Corporation, February, 1843, in which his opponent was Alderman Isaac Butt:—"I am an Irishman, and I am an ardent admirer of the lovely and fruitful land of my birth, my fatherland."

† Spenser mentions it in "Colin Clout's come home again," line 123. I hope there is no need to quote Callanan's "Gougaune Barra," which the next stanza recalls. The Allo flows into the Blackwater near Kanturk.

In our own day, or near our day,
 In Desmond the deep-valleyed,
 Poor Callanan was wont to stray
 On summer eves, and dallied
 Along thy brink with poet-dreams
 And legends sad that hallow
 The windings of our Irish streams
 And "float down echoing Allo."

Simmons of *Blackwood* here was "raised"
 (*Loquendo yankicé*) at Kilworth,
 Whose poems, by Kit North o'erpraised,
 A passing glance are still worth ;
 And Edward Walsh, not far away,
 Sang his "Mairgreed ni Challa,"
 But where his rustic schoolhouse lay,
 In sooth I know not, Allo!

One poet more I'll link with thee.
 More sweet than lark or mavis,
 From manly heart sincere and free
 Forth flowed the song of Davis.
 Nor all at random do I name
 The patriot bard of Mallow,*
 For in his boyhood oft he came
 To muse along the Allo.

* Those for whom a note would be necessary about these Munster poets, Thomas Davis, Jeremiah Joseph Callanan, Edward Walsh, and Bartholo-

Thou swellest lovely Avondhu
 (Now called, alas! Blackwater);
 Her broader tide takes up anew
 The chorus thou hast taught her.
 Belov'd art thou of coot and crane,
 Of willow and of sallow:
 (The difference betwixt these twain
 Is more than *I* know, Allo!)
 But now enough I've named thy name,
 Enough I've sung my saga;
 And shrined for ever is thy fame
 Within the leaves of Maga.
 Hatched is my tiny brood of rhymes,
 Which are, I grant, but callow:
 Perchance their wings will grow betimes
 And waft me to thee, Allo.
 Farewell until we meet. If e'er
 My pilgrim-steps should ramble
 To where Kilcolman's crumbling stair†
 Grows green with weed and bramble,
 No stranger shall I feel, and thou,
 Oh, limpid stream and shallow!
 Wilt greet me as a friend. But now
 Farewell, my winsome Allo!

mew Simmons (a favoured contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine* thirty or forty years ago), are exhorted to consult the fine collection of the "Ballads of Ireland," edited in two volumes by Mr. Edward Hayes. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's admirable "Ballad Poetry of Ireland," which gives specimens of all the poets we have named, may be had in a sixpenny edition.

† Edmund Spenser lived at Kilcolman Castle.

DOWN BY THE DODDER.

NATURE I love in all her moods,
 But I more oft have sought her
 Where on the silence of green woods
 Breaks in the rush of water.
 The noise of streamlet's ceaseless flow
 Has soothed my spirit ever—
 Blank seems fair Nature's fairest show
 Without some gleaming river.

Had I to own a grand estate—
 (The notion makes me shiver)—
 For these three things I'd stipulate :
 A lake, a hill, a river.
 Your dull, flat, woody parks may be
 Baronialler and broader—
 A glen for me 'twixt hills and sea,
 With a live stream like Dodder.

Too long have I thy neighbour been,
 Dear Stream, without exploring
 Thy course amid the meadows green,
 Thy purling and thy roaring :
 For thou, too, placid Stream, hast roared,
 While in wild, wintry weather
 Thou hast thy mountain torrent poured
 Between the crags and heather.

Thy mountain cradle's far away,
Thy race is run ; and mine is
Nearer perhaps—ah! who can say
How near?—unto its *finis*.
And so from Life's loud, dusty road,
A somewhat jaded plodder,
I steal to this serene abode,
And thee, suburban Dodder.

I lean me on this orchard wall
And sniff the pears and cherries—
Each shrub and tree, both great and small,
Stoops 'neath its load of berries.
That redbreast thieving yonder, see!
Poor innocent marauder,
The seventh commandment binds not thee
A-robbin' near the Dodder.

And now our seaward ramble meets
A rustic, quaint, and still town,
Which you must spell with double *l*—
God bless it, dear old Milltown!
Yet here, even here, one likes to dine:
Rich scenery's poor fodder
For poet going up the Rhine,
Or going down the Dodder.

My song must cease, but thine goes on;
Thy musical, meek murmur
Broke Nature's silence ages gone—
Thy voice has but grown firmer.
In shade and shine, grave, gay, sing on,
And scoop thy channel broader;
From dawn to dark, from dark to dawn,
Flow on, sing on, O Dodder!

Flow on! Poor Moore once warbled here
"Flow on, thou shining river!"
Thy race is run, the sea is near,
My muse grows sad—forgive her.
And as we've strewn upon thy banks
Our very softest sawder,
Flash back thy sunniest smile in thanks
Upon thy Laureate, Dodder!

I leave thee. Shall it be for aye,
A river's long Forever?
"I will return," we often say,
And yet return, ah! never.
Well, on Life's road, through dust or flowers,
A not less useful plodder
I'll be, please God, for these calm hours
Spent on the banks of Dodder.

COCK-CROW IN FRANCE.

HARK to that voice! Methinks I recognise
 Accents familiar to these ears condemned
 So long to strain at half-guessed foreign sounds.
 Say, dost thou come from those far-distant isles—
 Far distant in sad verity to me,
 Though many a magic vapour-steed each day
 Achieves the journey over land and main?
 Art thou of Celtic or of Saxon race,
 That thus the feelings of thy soul find vent
 In language to my soul intelligible?
 No; but the birds and beasts of all the climes,
 Each several species to its idiom true,
 Concordant thus hold converse as they may.
 The robin, chirping on the grey tombstone
 Where rest my father's bones, might chant its hymn
 Here by the banks of this most fair Mayenne,
 Nor need interpreter with Gallic robin.
 There is one dialect, but one, for all
 The robins of the universe. And thou,
 Thou, too, proud-crested bird, thy crow recalls
 That farmyard monitor whose matin chimes
 Would chide my sloth on summer morns of yore.

Nay, such it was that thrice reproachful smote
The tortured, wavering, noble heart of him
Who, rushing from the gaze of those meek eyes,
Wept bitterly.

Nor deem the Muse profane,
If, 'mid her play, such solemn thoughts intrude.
Not without solemn purpose she contrasts
The peaceful uniformity of all
The races of God's creatures animate ;
All save their lord and master, him for whom
The one sole Lord and Master made them. Men,
With but a mound of earth, a stream between them,
Differ, like worlds apart, in thought and speech.
Not so the lower tribes that live and move ;
For list ! the cock-crow of this quaint French town
Re-echoes faithfully the chanticleer,
That flaps his wing and crows, perchance, this hour,
Before George Kielty's door in dear Killowen.

THE IRISH CHILDREN'S FIRST COMMUNION.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.—THE CATECHISM CLASS.

My story wafts me—if so slight a thing .

Be deemed a story—backward many years ;

I dread to count them, for on viewless wing

Fast fleeteth from me with its hopes and fears

Life's week of work-days, and the Sabbath nears,
Silent and swift. Far back and far apart

From present duties fond remembrance peers,

While scenes, long vanished, into being start

From bygone summer-times of year and life and heart.

How sweet the mem'ry of those summer days,

Whose sun shone brighter far than sun shines
now,

When down the steep and rugged mountain-ways

Sped many a peasant-child whose sunburnt brow

Told of long watches shared with sheep and cow,

Out on the brae, in fair or blustering weather.

But now released they come with merry row

Of shouts and laughter, skipping o'er the heather,

The girls linked arm-in-arm, the boys in bands
together.

So many helping hands can parents spare?
 They're bidden to the catechism class,
 And all the parish youngsters must be there.
 For though on ev'ry Sunday after Mass,
 The children who are old enough to 'pass"
 Are dinned with Christian doctrine, yet 'tis found
 Most of their giddy little heads, alas!
 Imbibe it slowly, and the priest feels bound
 To stretch the Sunday-school at times the whole week
 round.

When winter days have lengthened into spring,
 And spring's chill rains have ceased to pour
 amain,
 When larks begin to make the welkin ring—
 Then down the hillside and across the plain,
 Noisy and blithesome, winds the swelling train
 Of children, to the chapel hieing fast.
 No tight-laced boot or boddice causeth pain:
 Such cramping fashions to the winds they cast—
 Barefoot and free they speed, and reach their goal
 at last.

For on last Sunday, when "the Book was changed"
 The second time, arose the mild uproar
 Of women, who with careful hand arranged
 Their Sunday gowns behind them and before,

Half kneeling and half sitting on the floor ;
While on *their* side the men, in frieze bedight,
Relieved their wearied ankles less or more,
Not standing, sitting, nor yet kneeling quite,
But lolling on left knee, with elbow on the right.

Yet soon they stood ; and when the stir had ceased,
And gallery grandees their seats had ta'en—
After some moments' solemn pause, the priest
Turned to instruct his simple flock with plain
And earnest words, whereof they best retain
This final warning : “ Come, my children dear,
Work at your catechism might and main,
For some of you are backward still, I fear,
And now within a month the Bishop will be here.”

Then with a father's mild authority,
Strong in his priestly power and love, he spake ;
Knowing full well his people would but be
Happy and proud such sacrifice to make
For holy faith and for their children's sake.
And so poor mothers, till the month be o'er,
Must the routine of household duties break,
That their “ wee girleens ” may be free to store
Within their innocent minds a hoard of Christian
lore.

Thus through the bygone week the children came,
Not (as in towns) from streets and lanes hard
by,

But most from distant homes ; and who could
blame

Those entering late? Yet doth the wise priest
try

To frown a little, as, demure and sly,
The truants fain by stealth would reach their
place.

How swift the eager, crowded moments fly,
As rival classes through their chapters race—
Till lo! again 'tis come, the day of rest and grace.

No day of rest for First Communion class !

The priest his tardy breakfast speeds, to come
To the young swarm that tarries after Mass.

Hushed at his coming is the busy hum
Of question and reply, and all grow dumb

While Father John repeats his explanation

(Not yet half frequently enough for some)

Of what each one must do in preparation

For First Communion these, and those for Confirma-
tion.

Deftly he then examines lads and lasses,

Mingling judicious praise with kind reproof,
Transfixing culprits through his silver "glasses"—

But hark! the *clink-clink* of a horse's hoof.

A frieze coat hurries in, yet stands aloof
 Till asks the priest what may his business be.
 Death is a visitor beneath his roof!
 'Tis a sick-call away behind Croagh Shee—
 Thither the pastor hastes, the children breathe more
 free.

Then swells anew the catechism clatter—
 “*How many Gods are there?*” and “*What is sin?*”
 For the poor teachers 'tis no easy matter
 Within fair limits to control the din,
 Especially when “ups and downs” begin.*
 But when the tumult soars beyond due bounds,
 The “Master” takes his cane, ne'er used within
 These hallowed walls—and yet the eager sounds
 Calm down, as, cane in hand, he sternly goes his
 rounds.

Among the boys, a mighty monarch, he
 Doth all the week hold undivided sway
 Within the sultry schoolhouse which you see
 Out yonder near the churchyard gate. To-day
 A gentler sovereign, easier to obey,

* Is a note needed here? “Let us have ups and downs!” was a common cry of the children when I was one of them—namely, “let us change our places according as we answer right or wrong, so that the good ones may reach the head of the class and the others gravitate towards the bottom.”

Rules meekly 'mid the girls : 'tis Miss O'Neill
 From Hawthorn Nook, a mile along the bay,
 Who tries to make her three young charges feel
 For this most holy task some of her own bright zeal.

For these the hours of class seem all too brief,
 But to their pupils tardy sounds the bell
 Which brings tired head and restless limb relief,
 Gathering them round the altar-rails to swell
 The chorus of Hail Marys. Then pell-mell
 The urchins scramble for their caps, and press,
 With that rude crushing schoolboys love so well,
 Out to the road. The girls depart with less
 Of disregard for peace, propriety, and dress.

Then what a merry progress homeward ! Some
 Proceed but intermittently, delaying
 Betimes with this or that familiar chum,
 At pitch-and-toss, or tig, or marbles playing,
 So long that motherkind at home are saying :
 " What can be keeping Billy there this late ?"
 William, meanwhile, his chances sagely weigh-
 ing,
 Decides that, though the charm of " mebs " be
 great,
 For dinner cold or scant it scarce will compensate.

The Sunday dinner! Epicures, in vain

My muse to *you* would picture what that means
 For those whose week-day fare is passing plain,
 At best a herring; but to-day brown beans
 Steam round their bit of bacon, with young
 greens

Or cauliflower to enhance the zest

Of what to hungry health is worth tureens
 Of turtle to the rich—potatoes dressed
 In native jackets all, smiling their very best.

This is the bait which wileth Billy home

E'en from that fascinating pitch-and-toss.

Lured by this prospect, he will scorn to roam

After the brightest butterflies that cross

His homeward pathway. Without further loss
 Of time he hast'neth in with cheeks aglow,

And doth his cap upon the dresser toss;

Whilst mother mildly grumbles, "Home so slow!
 The Catechism class was over long ago."

PART II.—ANNIE.

Thus, months beforehand, twice at least a week,

And, as the end drew nearer, twice a day,

Did these dear, simple Irish children seek

That whitewashed chapel 'twixt the hills and
 bay,

Turning their holy taskwork into play,
 Yet learning well Faith's verities sublime.

God bless and guard them ! Heaven's for such
 as they.

May all reach safe in turn that brighter clime—
 Heirs of eternity, though children frail of time.

The boys flock down in noisy bands ; the girls
 More slowly but more steadily proceed.
 That modesty and all heaven's purest pearls
 Their souls adorn, on each bright face you read,
 As on *Her* face who o'er the hills with speed
 Went to the Baptist's mother. May they ne'er
 Darken their souls with evil thought or deed,
 Kept pure by poverty and work and prayer,
 And by that Food Divine for which they now prepare !

Among these little girls came three at first
 With their kind governess from Hawthorn Nook ;
 But one of these three sisters, fondly nursed,
 Caressed and cherished, seemed unfit to brook
 Life's gentlest gales. The pretty blush forsook
 Her cheek, her tiny hands yet whiter grew :
 Then was she left at home with some good book,
 Or set some easy fireside task to do :
 She was the youngest child—youngest and dearest
 too.

And here a curious fancy crosses me
 Which Muse less homely would austere-ly
 smother—

Something that I have sometimes seemed to see
 About the namesakes of our Lady's mother,
 (More numerous than those of any other
 Except our Lady's own). If arch and canny
 And prone to play one sly trick or another—
 If wild and frolicsome, their name is Nannie :
 If gentle, meek, and fair, we soften it to Annie.

And such was Annie Desmond. Fair and bright,
 Alas ! too bright and fair to cheer us long—
 Hers the sad brightness of a starry night :
 'Twas easy seeing Annie was not strong,
 That pink tinge showed that something must be
 wrong.

“Nay, Annies always die,” I heard one say ;
 And I indeed 'mid the celestial throng
 Know some dear angels of that name, and they
 In their fresh dewy morn did heavenward steal away.

Why should they not? How good soe'er and
 dear,

We must not grudge them to God's loving care.
 Lord ! it is well for us to serve Thee here,
 But better, safer to be with Thee *there*—

In thy blest home which *she* must surely share,
 Who gracefully the cross did late resign
 That Thou hadst willed her long and well to
 bear.

May light perpetual upon her shine,
 And may her faith and hope, in life, in death, be mine!

Our Annie's place in heaven is ready now;
 The angels call her, and she must not stay.
 God lays his hand upon her innocent brow
 And draws her to his loving heart for aye—
 One cloudless morning is her life's brief day.
 She to her nest on high her flight will take,
 And, as on dovelet's wing, soar far away.
 So the good priest the sad news tries to break:
 She on her deathbed must her First Communion make.

For though a catechism class she taught,
 She, too, was but preparing for the Feast
 Of First Communion when the death-blight caught
 Her delicate frame, and all her labours ceased.
 Her pupils (youngest she herself and least)
 Are now another's; but each day they steal
 To ask for "poor Miss Annie," and the priest
 Bids them all pray for her each time they kneel,
 And then her little friends look graver than they
 feel.

Annie must die. But, though Death held her fast,
His grasp relaxed a little, and she tried
To gain as much of vigour as might last
Till, with her mother watching by her side,
She crept, pale as her snow-white frock, to hide
Hard by the altar rails. There, bending low,
She prayed that Jesus as his little bride
Would make her, too, that holy rapture know
Whereof Imelda* died so sweetly long ago.

Angels unseen play with her round about
Until He comes to hush her longing sighs,
The Lord of angels; and the joy shines out
On her pale face and through her meek bright
eyes.

Unheard on earth, her grateful hymns arise
Up to the Throne, and showers of grace descend
Where 'mid the lilies the Beloved lies.
Soon, soon that Lord his messenger will send
To bid her to his Feast whose joy shall never end.

Then, tired and happy, to her little bed
Home she is borne, till Jesus comes once more
For the last time, to give her strength to tread
The perilous road we all must travel o'er,

* Blessed Imelda Lambertini died at Bologna in the rapture of her miraculous First Communion, on Easter Sunday, in the year 1333.

From life to judgment. With her little store
 Of merits gained, her trivial debts to pay,
 She goes to Him who calls her. Evermore
 All bright and pure in heaven's unfading May,
 Her glad eternity one First Communion Day.

And so another angel sings in heaven;
 Another hillock rises 'mid the grass
 Of old Kilbroney, where on summer even,
 Or on fine Sundays after latest Mass,
 Poor Annie's mother and her sisters pass
 A cheerful hour in loving talk and prayer.
 But *she* is safe: not so are these, alas!
 Who Life's stern, glorious perils still must dare—
 May they the fullest grace of First Communion share!

PART III.—THE GREAT DAY.

A week, one brief week only, and the day
 Of First Communion shall have dawned. Dear
 child!
 Thy Saviour cometh. Oh! prepare the way:
 He only wants a pure heart undefiled.
 Banish from thine each thought untoward and
 wild,
 And grow more like to Him this heavenly Guest,
 More holy, and more humble, and more mild.
 So will He come with joy into thy breast,
 Lavish his treasures there, and sweetly take his rest.

Another week! But much is still to do—

In turn the children at the good priest's side
Must kneel to purify their souls anew

In that all-cleansing, sanctifying tide

Which from the Sacred Heart flows far and
wide.

No heart is pure enough for this great feast,

Yet Christ would share it with us ere He died,
And his Heart's yearnings never since have
ceased:

And now He comes to these, his dearest though his
least.

There are rich, vivid moments in life's day—

Chiefly to young and guileless spirits given—
Keen, exquisite joy that will not, must not stay,
For this is earth around us, and not heaven.

This fullest rapture, without taint or leaven
Of sin or sadness, can be felt by none

More perfectly than by the child that, shriven
From its least trace of evil, thought or done,
Sees in clear morning sky the First Communion sun.

The sun shines brightly out, as if it knew

How many hearts are glad to see it shine;
For all the dresses white and ribbons blue
Borrow a brighter glow, O sun! from thine.

Whole months of sunshine would these maids
 resign
 (What matters hay crop or the ripening corn?)
 To be secured until this day's decline
 From drenching downpour and from mist forlorn —
 All sunshine bright as now, this First Communion
 morn.

Yes, till the day's decline; for not till then
 These snowy garments shall be doffed. In bands,
 Through lanes and hamlets, and then home again,
 They'll shyly march, with interwoven hands,
 Less gay but happier than their wont. Thy sands,
 O Time! should glide less rapidly to-day.
 But now 'tis early morning, yet there stands
 A little knot at stages on the way,
 Eager to shine among the churchward-bound array.

Thus the procession gathers on its course,
 And in fair order gains the chapel-gate,
 Where Father John with pride reviews his force,
 Chiding the few who even now come late,
 (As come they will, how long soe'er you wait.)
 Then to its proper place each class proceeds,
 And each one tries, although the strain is great,
 Not to look round, but kneeling prays or reads—
 The prayer of such as these the great God hears and
 heeds.

And now the belfry's hushed. A final thrill
Of deeper expectation ; for at last
The vestry-door opes wide and wider still :
In red and white the servers flutter fast,
Each to his post, with tapers tall which cast
A dull glare 'mid the sunshine. Then all stand
Until the mitred Sire hath slowly passed,
Bearing his crosier in his trembling hand—
A fatherly old man, austere, yet kind and bland.

The children think that bishops must perforce
Have snowy heads like this which lowly bends
In prayer at altar-foot. Meanwhile, of course,
Each little heart its private prayers suspends,
For see, the Bishop now the steps ascends
With Father John in surplice by his side,
Who slightly timorous himself pretends
The boys' manœuvres carelessly to guide,
And rubrical mistakes with quiet skill to hide.

The Mass begins. They kneel, and e'en the priest
Kneels where he's wont to stand, and strikes
his breast
At *their* Confiteor ; and when they've ceased,
He speaks out slowly, solemnly the rest.
O First Communicants ! pray, pray your best,

For time is passing, and the moment nears
For which so many prayers have been ad-
dressed—
So many longing sighs and heart-wrung tears—
Pray now with tears to Him who falling tear-drop
hears.

The Gospel o'er, the servers seat them round
Upon the altar-steps: the rest sit too,
And nought is heard save the impressive sound
Of many silent hearts. "My children, you
Who are my joy and pride, my treasure true"—
So doth the Bishop his discourse begin
Which I in vain might strive to preach anew,
For (more than words) his looks, tones, gestures
win
Their way to innocent hearts undimmed by care or
sin.

"Happy, my children, happy, happy ye!
The Lord is with you. He who said of old
'Suffer the little ones to come to Me,
The tender, snow-white lambkins of my fold'—
He cometh now within your breasts to hold
Sweet converse, and his gracious gifts to shower.
Ah! not by man's tongue can the tale be told
Of all the works of grace and love and power
That He, the hidden God, works in Communion-hour.

“ List to his prayer : ‘ *My child, give me thy heart !*’

From this entreaty turn not cold away,

But beg Him of his bounty to impart

All gifts and graces of this blessed day,

And seal your hearts as all his own for aye.

So when the years, many or few, have fled,

Through which God willeth you on earth to
stay,

He who shall month by month your souls have
fed

Will at the last come thus to bless your dying bed.

“ Oh ! in the days or years ’twixt now and then

May God be with you all, my children dear !

May you grow up good women and good men.

If God should spare you long to labour here,

May you live happy in his love and fear !

Most precious earnest of that love is given

To you this morn. Pray ! for the moment’s near

For which to fit your spirits ye have striven—

He comes into your hearts whose smile is heaven of
heaven.

“ Pray, then, my dear ones ! Bow each heart and
head

Before the awful Deity that deigns

To stoop so low our wretched souls to wed.

On high, in glory, love, and light He reigns ;

Yet on our altars hidden He remains,

To come into our hearts. Your hearts to-day
 Will first receive Him. Children, still take pains
 To welcome Him as sweetly as ye may ;
 Pray on, then, in your hearts ; pray, dearest chil-
 dren, pray !”

The solemn rites proceed. The Sanctus bell
 Is followed by the double chime that bends
 Each head in worship. Wrong it were to tell,
 In such rude rhyme, of Him who now descends
 'Mid these his dearest and most cherished
 friends—

The young, the poor, the simple. Let us pray
 That these fresh hearts for ours may make
 amends,
 And that our icy chill may melt away
 In these warm memories of First Communion Day!

TO THREE YOUNG MISSIONARIES SETTING
OUT FOR CHINA.

FAR away from Sicily the sunny,*

Far away from France the gay and fair,
Far away from home and friends and kindred,

'Mid the heathen, exile, death ye dare ;

For apostle's toils and martyr's perils

Are your bosom's fondest hope and care.

So ye flee from home and friends and kindred,

Far away—but Jesus will be there ;

And his Mother smiles on you from heaven,

And the saints a joyous envy bear,

Praying for you—most of all, great Xavier :

“ I, too, yearned to preach the glad news there.”

Thus on high. On earth below, God's faithful

Bless your names, and offer alms and prayer.

While your brothers, linked with you more closely,

We who bear the slandered name ye bear—

Wheresoever Jesus bids us serve Him,

In Sicily the sunny, France the fair,

Or Ireland the holy and the patient—

Toil we in the cool shade or the glare,

We your memory will proudly cherish,

As we cherish something pure and rare.

* Father Alphonsus Rizzo, S.J., since dead, was a Sicilian.

And I think that ye, too, O my brothers!
 In your hearts a nook for us will spare.
 Thus, though thousand foamy leagues asunder,
 Let us in each other's fortunes share.
 So, farewell! Away from home and kindred—
 But God's love goes with you everywhere.
 Shall we see your smile again? No, never,
 Till in heaven—ah! pray for us—yes, *there!*

 THE DEAD.

FROM VICTOR HUGO.

How many gaily sing and lightly smile,
 Who tears, unceasing, bitter tears, should shed
 O'er the low grave where lies the best-loved
 dead!—

The dead who cheered life's journey many a mile,
 Whose love seemed life itself one little while!
 Relentless might of time's swift, noiseless tread!
 What soft, forgetful moss on each green bed
 A very few quick passing years will pile,
 And, as completely as do ocean's waves,
 A little grass blot out unnumbered graves!
 The dead pass quickly—peaceful let them lie
 In lonely quiet 'mid the circling gloom—
 In human hearts their memory will die
 Before their ashes melt within the tomb!

A PROTEST.

TO THE TRANSLATOR OF THE FOREGOING SONNET.

AH! wherefore, gentle Sister, make thine own
 Of words interpreting so ill thy heart?
 Not hopeless thus the yearning tears which start
 Into thine eyes, and not thus sad thy tone
 When thou recallest all the lov'd ones flown.
 Not thus from mem'ry do *our* dead depart,
 For Faith and Love on soaring pinion dart
 Up from the grassy grave to God's own throne.

Of each dear friend that's gone, the deathless soul,
 Whose mortal hovel crumbles 'neath the sod,
 Lives on (for all were good) in heavenly rest.
 May love divine my lot with theirs enrol,
 And in my flesh may I behold my God!
 This, this my hope is laid up in my breast.*

* Job, xix. 27.

“PRAY FOR A. L.”

PRAY for thee? Yes. I've sometimes said
Yes to that parting word, and paid
 Slight heed unto my promise—now
 I utter it as half a vow,
 And pray for thee I shall and will.
 Howe'er our happy lot may fill
 The days with duties, Memory
 Will ever keep a nook for thee,
 And pray for thee I will and shall.
 Again those little twin-verbs* all
 Their shades of sense combine
 To emphasise my vow, to twine
 A chain around my heart and thine—
 A triple chain of loving thoughts,
 Hail Marys and forget-me-nots—
 A rosary of altar-prayer
 Which may unite us everywhere
 Until that end which is no end
 But true beginning: pray, O friend!
 That thou, O genial soul and dear!
 May'st be my brother there, as here.

* We had been discussing Alford's *Queen's English* when this "laboured impromptu" gurgled up.

A BIRTHDAY IN RELIGION.

I FEEL it hard, and very hard to hold—
 The world grows wicked as the world grows old.
 Through many a changeful year I've breathed its air,
 And found it ever genial, bracing, fair.
 But, ah! my lot has been a special choice!
 Not all can lift to heaven so glad a voice—
 A gladsome voice, yet broken by sweet tears
 Of grateful wonder at the happy years
 My soul hath known. Not all are forced to cry,
 How strange, how strange that I, yea, such as I,
 Should be so fondly tracked from hour to hour,
 Unworthy trophy of God's pitying power!
 For which of all the changes of my fate
 But whispers of a love too good, too great
 For any, save the only Great and Good?
 Vainly my stubborn heart had long withstood
 The onset of those graces, till at last,
 Like impious Julian, when the fight was past,
 Writhing in death upon the Persian sod,
 The cry leaped forth, "Oh! thou hast won, my God!"
 Nor, 'mid the graces lavished on me, least
 I prize the providence which, soon as ceased

* *Vicisti, Galilæe!*

The blessed bondage of the Novice, set
Over the novice (novice then and yet)
A master, father, brother, friend so kind,
So strong, so gentle, wise, unselfish—blind
To others' faults, keen-sighted for his own—
Duty by labours, not by precepts shown—
That grave good-nature which so many bless,
That wise facility in smiling *Yes*,
Able betimes so kind a *No* to smile,
As doth refusal of its pang beguile.

Ah! timid Muse, despise thee as they may,
Thou yet enablest this mute heart to say
Things that would sound more tasteless still in prose.
My birthday thanks might glibly, had I chose,
Have trickled out amid the fruit and wine—
Such "acts of hope" were never in my line,
Unless to turn an artless rhyme or two
When some rare courtesy has pierced me through.
For who but you could think to deck more gay
Our board in homage to my natal day?
Not one of all the—(guess how many!)—e'er
Was graced with such observance anywhere:
E'en in those early days which slid away
Close on the marge of that dear northern bay,
Nor yet, when under Neilsbrook's summer shade
"On Lough Neagh's bank," the freed collegian
strayed,

While groups of laughing angels gambolled round,
Than whom none kinder out of heaven are found.

Than whom none kinder? Kinder still are here,
Friends still more patient, surer, more sincere :
For here are ties which Death but faster binds ;
Hearts more devoted still, and richer minds.
Thus he, with father, brother, friend, who parts,
A hundredfold of helping hands and hearts
In this life wins, and in the next, *oh ! what ?*
Yet (God forgive me if He blames the thought)
I own I cannot vehemently sigh
To go and spend my next birthday on high.*
At six or sixty, not midway between,
But better fall full ripe than plucked off green.
For 'tis our hope and prayer that each fresh year
That God may let us live and labour here,
May each pass quietly and each improve
Our lot eternal in the home above.
Well, short or long, we must not dare to ask,
But do our best at each day's petty task ;
To us the gain, to God the praise be given,
And may each birthday find our souls more ripe for
heaven.

* This bears too close a resemblance to the Rev. Zebediah Skinner's rejoinder to the grateful beggar-woman who prayed, " May the Laird tak ye to Hisself this vara night." " Thanks for your kind wishes, my good woman, but you need not be so very precise about the *time*."

THE FIRST SIN.

A DAY upon these eyes hath shone,
 How long ago I cannot tell,
 Which found an angel at the dawn,
 And left at eve a fiend of hell.

How soon beyond the unreasoning years,
 When sin was yet above my power ;
 How long ere even a mother's fears
 Woke for her darling—sped that hour ?

That hour wherein the guardian sprite
 That brooded o'er the Christian child,
 Still shining in baptismal white,
 Was thence by wicked force exiled.

Yet no, albeit sin's faintest stain
 Pure spirits thrills with grief and fear ;
 Like some poor bird whose young are ta'en,
 Yet still she flutters wildly near.

Each moment of those infant days
 That seraph hovered anxious round,
 Grateful that 'mid earth's darksome maze
 One happy, stainless soul was found.

But ah! there came at length the hour
When o'er the dim horizon rose
The light which lent that awful power
Of doing evil. When? God knows.

And now the tender spirit yearns
With deeper yearning towards his trust;
And now the watching demon burns
To drag the white robe in the dust.

Who conquered? Did one hour go by
With sin's sad faculty untried?
Soon, soon, if sin could make him fly,
My angel soon had left my side.

The sun shines on, the breezes blow;
Yet earth hath grown blank, dead, and dull
For him whom earth no more should know,
If God were not all-merciful.

Perhaps he feigns unwonted glee,
And joins his sisters' merry din;
But they are angels still, and he
Has sinned—his first dark, deadly sin.

If—if amid those guileless souls
Death snatched him suddenly away,
There where the sulphurous ocean rolls
His drowning cry would ring for aye.

And while her tears the mother dries—
 “Thank God! my sinless boy’s in heaven”—
He is in hell!

But no, he dies
 Not yet. My first sin was forgiven.

Ah! if God’s mercy wins at last,
 ’Twill be a strange and piteous tale
 When all that ’twixt us since hath passed
 Is told within the Jewish Vale.

A ROSE AND A ROSEBUD.

A WHITE Rose opened her leaves to the sun—
 A creamy, velvety, dewy thing—
 When the birds perched near her, every one
 Was sure his sweetest song to sing.
 Her delicate fragrance thrilled the air
 That breathed around her sheltered nook—
 Tended with care in a garden fair
 Hard by the field of the brook.

A stranger strolled to the garden gate,
 Lilting a tune with mellow throat.
 Quoth the Rose so fair: “I must declare
 That I’ve never heard a sweeter note.”
 But the stranger mused: “I have journeyed far,
 And here full gladly I’d repose;”
 And when he espied the Rose, he cried:
 “Never saw I so sweet a rose.”

Well, this rhyming's a curious craft—
Fancy me saying all this in prose!
Many, no doubt, will deem me daft,
But *they* never saw my wee white Rose.
Anyhow, soon the stranger felt
In that sunny garden quite at home :
With grateful heart near the Rose he knelt,
And vowed that further he ne'er would roam.

There's a rosebud now on the Rose's breast,
Whose dainty perfume seems to be
A blending of scents the purest and best,
Such as sweetwilliam and rosemary.
God guard the Rose and the Rosebud both
From ev'ry breeze that harshly blows !
As the months advance, this bud perchance
May bloom into a rich red rose.*

*The names of sundry persons and places are hidden in these mystical verses, which to the uninitiated will seem even more silly than they are.

A FAREWELL.

IN heaven are no farewells—on earth below
 We meet and part, as seasons come and go.
 Nought here is stable. On the Elwy's bank
 Stand where the eddies, pressing rank on rank,
 Whirl past your feet : so swift the glittering race
 That change or motion scarce the eye may trace.
 Yet changeth all. Not now those waters flow
 Which kissed the warm air cool an hour ago.
 Yes, all is changed. The waves whose buoyant dance
 Flashes this moment on your dazzled glance,
 Bring from the distant blue of mountain braes,
 Where lies the cradle of their infant days,
 News later than the waves which caught the smile
 Of sunrise here. Those, bounding on meanwhile
 Through many a cornfield, many a woodland scene,
 Have seaward sped—and lo ! the grass is green.
 Ev'n so life's stream glides with such equal flow
 The same smooth sheet before you seems to glow.
 Yet fast it fleeteth ; glen and pebbly shore,
 Where late it tarried, woo it now no more.
 All things, around, within us, change and change—
 Changes are often sad but seldom strange.

In heaven are no farewells. But now departs
 Our friend and father ; and by filial hearts

Is paid the parting tribute of their love
Which fain its earnest gratitude would prove
By outward token, as by inward prayer
That God's best blessing guard him everywhere.
Yes, Father, loved and none the less revered,
Revered the more, the more each hour endeared
To grateful breasts that prudent, placid sway
Which o'er us watched untiring day by day.
Of various race, from various climes we come,
Some from gay France, from fair Italia some,
Some from the Isle of Faith across the sea—
All found a father wise and true in thee.
Therefore thy name with blessing and kind word
Within these studious halls shall long be heard.
Nay, far beyond this Cymric mountain-vale,
We, scattered wide, shall oft repeat the tale
Of all thy modest worth. But here be given
Our last farewell. Farewell ! There's no farewell in
heaven.

OUR MIDNIGHT MASS.

LONG hours ere yet the Christmas sun
 Has smiled upon the snow,
 When Father Christmas has but waxed
 A minute old or so ;
 In the mid-hush of starry night
 The joybells warble clear,
 Out on the moonlight keen and crisp,
 And through the warm air here.

Here, in this homeliest home of God,*
 We kneel a happy few,
 While the first buoyant Christmas glow
 Serenely thrills us through.
 At solemn hour and strange we kneel
 Before our Captive's throne—
 On this one night of all the year
 He must not watch alone.

He is not lonely now. Around
 The breath of prayer ascends,
 And night glares redder than the noon—
 With silence music blends.

* The room which served as a chapel for the Jesuit Fathers when they first began their work in Limerick, in 1859.

Their souls are on the singers' lips.

They sing : "*A Child is born!*
Come, let us worship at the crib,
For this is Christmas morn."

'Tis Christmas, and green arches rise
Of ivy, twined with flowers ;
From lamp and taper mellow light
Streams round in joyous showers.
Nor deem that hearth-stone's ruddy blaze
Too home-like or too gay :
Our pilgrim-path is drear enough,
Beguile it as we may.

The light upon yon altar gleams,
And the Cross above the shrine,
And, higher up, on Him who points
Unto his Heart divine ;
And on our Mother's queenly form,
Begirt with blushing flowers,
And on that meek old man whose smile
Half seems to answer ours.

And then within the lustrous haze
Basks many a sculptured form—
From wreathèd wall and ceiling peer
The Christmas greetings warm.

But now a broader, merrier glow
The wistful gazer charms
Back to the nook where Mary beams,
Her Baby in her arms.

The same sweet Child doth Stanislaus,
The Child-saint, raptured bear.
And see! again It smiles at us
Beneath the altar there.
There, poor and cold, yet tenderly,
The new-born Babe is laid.
Who is He? It is He who said,
“*Be light!*” and light was made.

This is the birthday of God’s Child:
For He was once a child,
Born for our sake in snow-roofed cave
One winter midnight wild;
Whilst angels chaunted from the skies
(Are those their voices still?)
“Glory on high to God, and peace
To mortals of good will!”

To-day that Child is born again.
The Midnight Mass has sped,
And Jesus steals in meaner guise
Our souls more close to wed.

I scarce may envy her who clasped
The Infant to her breast,
Since He, the Babe of Christmas, comes,
In this poor heart to rest.

The Midnight Mass is o'er. The lamp
A paler radiance sheds
On cross and crib and gay festoon,
And all those drooping heads:
While flowers and leaves and happy hearts
Throb with a Christmas thrill:
"Oh! glory unto God on high,
And unto us good will!"

For leaves will fall, and flowers will fade,
And Christmastide will pass,
And hearts and hopes and fondest cares
May change, must change, alas!
Yet still let's keep the simple faith
Of those whose gifts adorn
This modest fane so lovingly
To welcome Christmas morn.

God's blessing on those kindly hearts,
And on each skilful hand
That with such quiet fervour wrought
What pious taste had planned.

Heaven is for such. Yet here, e'en here,
 May fairest fate befall !
 May Christmas last their lifetime round ! *
 God bless us each and all.

THE POOR MAN'S KNOCK.

'Tis many a year, a score and more,
 Since a little boy in blue frock
 Would run to open the great hall-door,
 Whose latch he scarce could reach from the floor—
 “ It is only a poor man's knock.”

The harsh word “*beggar*” was under ban
 In that quaint old house by the sea ;
 And little Blue Frock's announcements ran :
 “ 'Tis a poor little girl—'tis a poor blind man—
 Poor woman with children three.”

And when our little boy would say,
 “ There's a poor person at the door,”
 The sister who carried the keys that day
 From a willing mother leave would pray
 To give to him of her store.

* This was the Christmas of 1860, and before the next Christmas came round, one of the sisters referred to in the last stanza had given herself to God, while God had taken the other to Himself. One is now a Sister of Charity, and the other is, as we more than hope, in heaven. For which was the minstrel's prayer best fulfilled ?

But the little boy, ah! not always
Thus back to the parlour ran.
Often he hushed the whisper of grace,
And only said, with kind voice and face,
“There’s nothing for you, poor man.”

“Well, dear, God bless you all the same!”
Thus meekly they would reply.
Ah! hard little heart, what a pity and shame
To let the poor creatures go as they came—
Bid them wait till again you try.

Long years have fled. All changed his lot
Since that era of belt and frock;
Yet oft from the Judge doth he hear in thought—
“I was hungry, and you—you gave me nought
When you answered the poor man’s knock.”

And therefore he’d teach this rhyme, if he could,
To each little boy in blue frock:
“If you wish to be happy, try to be good,
And think that our Saviour asks you for food
When you ope to the poor man’s knock.”

THE LITTLE FLOWER STREWERS.*

DEAR children, kiss your flowers, and fling them at
his feet;

He comes, the Lord of flowers, of all things fair and
sweet.

His glory all is hidden, but who He is you know :
Then throw your flowers before Him, and kiss them
as you throw.

Yet envy not the flowers that die so sweet a death —
One heart's fond sigh is sweeter than rose's perfumed
breath ;

More sweet than sweetest incense the tears of love
that flow,
The thrill of faith that mingles with every flower
you throw.

Yes, let your flowers be emblems of holy thoughts
and prayers
That from your hearts are springing—for hearts alone
He cares.

* These verses, which borrow their name from one of the prettiest stories ever written—"The Little Flower Seekers"—were suggested by seeing the children kiss each handful of the flowers with which they strewed the corridors of the Convent of Mercy, Baggot-street, Dublin, during the Procession of the *Quarant 'Ore*, June 24, 1879.

Oh! may your hearts before Him with loving wor-
ship glow,
While thus you throw your flowers and kiss them as
you throw.

With lips unstained and rosy, kiss all the roses fair—
But thorns lurk 'mid the roses, and life is full of care.
Accept its thorns and roses—*both* come from God, you
know :
So bear your crosses gaily, and kiss them as you go.

Not all your path, dear children, can smile, like this,
with flowers :
For lifetimes would be fruitless, if all were sunny
hours.
The rain and snow in season must make the roses
grow :
So throw your flowers, dear children, and kiss them
as you throw.

Ah! soon the rose-leaves wither—we, too, like flowers
must die,
But in the heavenly springtime shall bloom again
on high,
That God unveiled beholding whom 'neath these
veils we know,
And at whose feet, dear children, our flowers, our
hearts, we throw.

FLOWERS FOR THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

I'VE sung the little children who strewed their
flow'rets fair

Along the convent pathways, for Christ was passing
there.*

A pious deed and holy—yet Christ Himself has
said:

“The poor are always with you; go, tend them in
my stead.”

And Christ Himself has spoken that tender word and
true:

“As if for Me you did it, I take whate'er you do
For one of these my children, my weakest and my
least.”

Since first that word was uttered, its sway has never
ceased.

That word, and yet another: when once the Saviour
smiled,

And, raising to his bosom, caressed a little child;

* See the preceding poem. An advertisement from the Children's Hospital, 15 Upper Temple-street, Dublin, states: “The members of the Flower Association make the wards look bright and beautiful with bouquets, supplied every week by their kindly hands. The arrival of these lovely and odorous gifts is a delight to the sick children.”

And when the children clustered too closely round
his knee :

“ Of such is heaven’s bright kingdom—ah ! let them
come to Me.”

Those words of meek entreaty are strong and mighty
still—

The breast of many a mother with patient love they
fill ;

Round many a puny outcast, round many an orphan
lone,

Those blessed words of Jesus a sheltering arm have
thrown.

Those words make many a virgin vow all her life
away

To save poor little children—but here my lighter
lay

Would sing of simpler service, more passing, yet
most true,

Which children unto children for love of Jesus do.

Those words make gentle maidens search all their
garden-bowers,

From plant and shrub to rifle their freight of fra-
grant flowers,

Not now for sacred pageant to deck God's altar-
 shrine,
 Yet for a purpose holy and almost as divine.

They bring their flowers to solace the tiny captives'
 chains,
 To cheer with scent and colour sick childhood's aches
 and pains,
 To give a glimpse of nature, of sunny air and sky,
 Where, pale and maimed and crippled, the little
 children lie.

O children rich and healthy! O merry girl and boy!
 Give thanks to God our Father for all that you enjoy.
 He gives you dainty raiment and sturdy strength of
 limb,
 Bright homes and loving parents—what will you
 give to *Him*?

“Whate'er for these poor children you do is done
 for Me.”

Ah! in each sickly infant the Infant Jesus see.
 As if 'twere He in person, on these your bounties
 shower—
 Kind words and food and clothing and toy and
 pretty flower.

“REAR HER FOR THE SACRED HEART.”

“LET us rear her up for the Sacred Heart !”

A father said of his little girl.

What a holy phrase for a simple man,

Tossed in this rude world's work-day whirl—

Not given, it seems, to pious things.

Playing a worldling's sturdy part :

But his youngest child and his only girl—

“Let's rear her up for the Sacred Heart.”

God be blessed for the faithful souls

That do their duty in every state,

Within the cloister or out in the world,

Working hard for heaven, early and late.

He was one. There are many such,

More, perhaps, for its breadth and length,

In our little Island of evergreen Faith—

More than elsewhere. God give them strength !

Good words and bad words do their work.

This has done its good in its day.

He who spoke it and she who heard,

They little thought how far 'twould stray.

He is gone, but the mother's left—

Both will do their promised part ;

And our little Monica, never fear,

Will still be dear to the Sacred Heart.

But, O mothers of little girls,
· As you fondle the glossy curls, and smile,
Remember your plaything has a soul ;
 Say in your motherly hearts the while :
“ She is my child, not mine alone—
 The good God's wholly, mine in part :
And with God's grace and in God's name,
 I'll rear her up for the Sacred Heart.”

NORAH'S BIRTHDAY.

THE third fair morn of April is shining in the sky ;
Though 'tis the month of showers, to-day is bright
 and dry :
No tears must fall from heaven—there's nought but
 sunny mirth
To greet the day which welcomed so sweet a flower
 to earth.
For this is Norah's birthday—how many years are
 gone
Since o'er her distant cradle the Star of India shone,
I cannot quite remember—'tis either six or four :
I must run down to Kingstown, the question to ex-
 plore ;
And with me I may carry this little birthday song,
Perchance a couplet adding as speeds the train
 along.

But, to make sure of ending, I'll end, my Norah
 dear,
With birthday prayers and blessings most loving
 and sincere.
Your birthday is in April, and, as the months fly
 round,
May you by every April be wiser, better found !
May many a showery April bring many a flowery
 May,
And e'en your bleak Decembers be Christmas-like
 and gay !
May nearly all your pathway be beautiful with
 flowers,
And may your darkest tempests be only April
 showers !
And so, dear little cousin, this birthday prayer I
 pray :
May Norah's earthly April bloom into Heaven's
 own May !

MOTTOES.

I.

OUR hearts were made for Thee, O Lord!
 And restless must they be,
 Until—O Lord, this grace accord!—
 Until they rest in Thee.*

II.

With you, my God, in you, for you,
 All that I think and say and do.

III.

Most loving Heart of Jesus,
 That bore for me such pain!
 Pierce now my heart with love's keen dart
 And burn it pure from stain.

IV. (*Going out.*)

Lord, send me forth to do thy will,
 But let me feel Thee present still.

V. (*Returning.*)

May kindness, purity, and truth,
 In all my thoughts, words, actions dwell,
 Abroad, at home! But now, in sooth,
 With joy I reach again my cell.

* *Fecisti nos, Domine, ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.—St. Augustine.*

VI.

Never, no ! never shall I rest
Till love of Jesus fills my breast.

VII.

God be blessed for all He lends—
Shelter, clothing, food, kind friends,
Busy days at work I love,
And the hope of rest above.

VIII.

In poverty and wealth, by old and young,
In health and sickness, with the heart and
tongue—
In life, in death, be this strong watchword
raised :
“ Glory to God ! Thank God ! Oh ! God be
praised ! ”

DAISY'S ANNIVERSARY.

'Tis a year since Daisy died—
Since we tried and vainly tried,
Grieving sore, our grief to hide.

For we knew 'twas wrong to feel
Sorrow for our darling's weal ;
Yet the tears would steal and steal.

“Dead? No, no! she hath but fled
Up to heaven to lay her head
On our Mother's breast,” we said.

Far too young she was to know
Aught of sin or sinful woe,
And God saw her fit to go.

Not too young her Lord to love,
And in childish ways to prove
How she loved Him, meek wee dove!

Bright and patient in her pain,
She would pray and not complain—
Never shall she moan again!

For our God with fondest care
Took her to his garden fair—
Daisies never wither there.

Next my heart one flaxen curl
Of our winsome little girl,
Margaret, our daisy-pearl.*

To my heart I'll clasp her yet,
When my longer day has set.
Daisy, pray for me, my pet!

Ah! I cannot, though I've tried,
Quite to-day my sadness hide—
'Tis a year since Daisy died.

* *Margu rite* is “a daisy” in French, and *Margarita* “a pearl” in Latin.

MONOTONY AND THE LARK.

A PROSE IDYL.

“How strange one never tires of the lark!” We were strolling round and round the garden, he and she, and little Mary and I—he and she arm-in-arm, and I hand-in-hand with little Mary—and the singing of the lark overhead seemed a part of the August sunshine. And my gentle cousin Annie said: “How strange one never tires of the lark!”

Yes, although it is so monotonous: on and on, almost the same always. A mere trill of joy, a mere gush of love and gratitude, a mere trickle of the simplest melody. No triumphant burst, no riotous gurgle, no pathetic murmur, no agonising spasm, no subtle gradation, no mellow fall from treble down to bass, no splendid leap from bass up to treble. On and on, a few artless, unvarying notes. And yet it never tires us, it is always musical, and fresh, and meekly joyous—image of the one unceasing song of the blessed, image of the rapturous monotony of heaven.

Is there not pain in a restless multiplicity of pleasure? Amidst the whirl of changes, is not the heart haunted by a vague dread that the next change may be sadly for the worse? It is a symptom of disease in the soul to stand in need of such vicissi-

tudes. Only commonplace souls, earthly souls, souls without depth or compass, souls with paltry resources of their own, and slavishly dependent upon outward things—none but these desire, none but these can endure perpetual variety, excitement, travel, change of scene, change of society, change of employment, change of amusement, change of change. The higher natures are stable, equable, self-contained, self-sustaining, placid, domestic—concentrated in their large memories, and in their larger thoughts and hopes—seeking and finding pleasure in a noble loyalty to duty, and regarding duty, not as a task-mistress to be served coldly for wages during as short a day as possible; but as a queenly mother, to live with, and cherish, and reverence, and love, and serve, day and night, in sunshine and in darkness, for life—at home with themselves, at home with their conscience and their God, at home in their own homes, at home with a sinless and happy monotony.

“How strange one never tires of the lark!” said the gentlest of my gentle cousins, Annie. And so, while we talked, and were silent, and smiled, and looked at each other, and at the flowers (alas! there was one of us who could not see the flowers except as memory might paint them), we went round and round the garden-walks, he and his sisters and I, unwearied by the sameness, arm in arm, and hand in hand. And all the while the lark, to his own keen

delight and ours, kept up his monotonous carol, high up out of sight, above the field of clover yonder, outside our garden's hedge; and his singing, like the brightness and the odour of the flowers and of the fruits, almost seemed to be a part of the summer sunshine.

But, ah! there is no sunshine now and no singing. It is winter. Is the lark dead? I know not; but my gentle cousin Annie is with God. And twice the daisies have gleamed in pink and white over the grave of him who could not see the flowers, but who shall see God for ever.

* * * * *

Again, after many years, this withered leaf flutters across my path. Perhaps God may use it as a message to some hearts simple and young as ours were then. Ay, and as theirs are still; for now they are all three gone home to God. Their bodies are in the same tomb, and their souls, I am sure, are in the same heaven; and they are praying, I am sure, for those who remain behind. One of those who remain behind writes: "It feels lonely, having no elder sister, but we get on very well, though we shall have need of many more acts of resignation than we should have had if Mary had been left to us," she, namely, with whom hand-in-hand I walked round the garden in that August forenoon long ago, while the sun shone and the lark sang overhead. .

TO T. D. SULLIVAN,

ON READING HIS "PLEA FOR THE SONG-BIRDS."

The Nation, Feb. 12, 1876.

AY, save the little song-birds, and bid them fill the
 grove
 With mirth and life and motion, with melody and
 love ;
 But yet their fate so cruel we now the less deplore,
 Since it has forced thee, Poet, to sing for us once
 more.

The chirping of the robin, the carol of the thrush,
 The nightingale's rich warbling, the skylark's liquid
 gush—
 Each in the glorious concert of nature has its part ;
 But better than all song-birds our Irish poet's
 heart.

Then let the gentle birdies still flit from spray to
 spray,
 Still lilt their airy music and live their little day ;
 But they for whom thou pleadest have no such gift
 of song
 As God has lent thee, Poet. Ah! be not silent long.

THE SLEEPY CARTHUSIAN.*

MANY years ago there lived in the monastery of Gottestheil a monk who was strangely persecuted by an indomitable drowsiness. With the best possible intentions he could not contrive to rise at midnight to go and sing Matins in the choir. Now nature, that had made him so sleepy-headed, gave him also a mechanical turn. Without any training, without any notion of mathematics, by the mere force of reflection and labour he manufactured a wonderful clock. To the apparatus for striking the hours he added a rude chime of bells. This, however, was insufficient, and immediately, at the corners and in the middle of the little capital which surmounted the dial, he placed a blackbird, a cock, and a little drummer with his drum. At the proper hour all this made a row. For some nights things went on well; but after a certain time, when midnight came, the chimes chimed, the blackbird whistled, the cock crew, the drummer drummed, and the monk—snored!

Another man would have been disheartened; but the Brother invoked again his inventive genius, devised a serpent, which was placed under his pillow, and which, when midnight came, was sure remorse-

† As this little thing is translated literally from Louis Veuillot's *Pèlerinage en Suisse*, we may mention that the *Spectator* called it "a veritable gem" when it appeared in the *Irish Monthly*.

lessly to hiss into his ear, "Get up, get up—it is the time!" This serpent was much more effective than the blackbird, the cock, the drum, and the chimes—all of which, besides, failed not still to come to its aid, with a little supplementary tantararara.

This succeeded admirably, and the Carthusian never missed awaking. Alas! in the middle of his joy at this success, he made a melancholy discovery. He had thought he was only drowsy, he sees now that he is lazy. Even when completely waked up, he hesitated about leaving his hard pallet. Many a minute he lost in relishing the pleasing consciousness of being in bed.

The matter called for an immediate reform. The Religious felt himself guilty, and the mechanic felt himself humiliated. Speedily a heavy board is placed over the bed, in such a fashion as to fall rudely on the sluggard's feet, ten seconds after the charitable warning of the serpent. More than once the poor monk betook himself to choir, lamed and bruised.

Well, would you believe it?—whether it was that the serpent had lost its shrillness, or that the board had become in course of time less weighty, or the old man more sleepy-headed—whether it was that his limbs had grown hardened, or that he had contracted the criminal habit of drawing them back before the chastisement descended, it was not long till

he felt the necessity of another invention. And so, every night before lying down, he tied to his arm a strong cord, which, at the fatal hour, stretched itself on a sudden, and jerked him out of bed.

At this point he had arrived. What fresh somnical projects he was turning over in his head heaven knows, when he found himself falling asleep for ever. Asleep! No, the fervent Christian judged not thus; and in spite of his little sin of sloth, full of confidence in Him who pardons, "Ah," he cried, "I am waking up at last."

A MIRACLE OF ST. ALOYSIUS.

O ALOYSIUS, to my heart most dear

Has ever been the music of your name—

Dearer henceforward, since to-day I hear

Of yet another most engaging claim,

Which makes this grateful bosom thrill anew

With joy that such a grace was sent through *you*.

A tiny maiden, seven sweet springtimes old,

Was taking flight from this dark earth of ours.

Ah! had she gone, our earth more dark and cold

Would since have been, more bleak, more bare of
flowers.

But you, St. Aloysius, whispered: "Nay,

The child must longer in her exile stay.

“The world has need of her. In years to come
The old will find in her fresh heart a store
Of filial piety ; a true man’s home
Her love will bless, till angels hovering o’er
Will mark with wonder ’mid the world’s light throned
Goodness and peace that to our heaven belong.”

God yielded to our needs and to your prayer.
How many since have blessed Him for her sake !
Decrepit age revives beneath her care,
Young hearts from hers a purer sunshine take.
O Aloysius, only heaven will tell
The fruits of this your gracious miracle.

We need her still. Ah! for a lengthened space
Keep her, kind Saint! from her bright heavenly
crown,
While every moment adds its meed of grace
And every moment finds you looking down
With fonder love and more approving smile
On her you saved from early death erewhile.

THE OLD SPOT.

THE robins sing, the river flows,
The leaves are just as green ;
But, ah! but, ah! my heart, God knows,
Is not as it has been.

Kind faces smile through cheerful tears,
Kind voices murmur round,
And hands, far sundered all these years,
The warm old clasp have found.

Again my yearning steps have strayed
Back to the dear old spot ;
But, where the mates that with me played?
I seek, and find them not.

The boy, so thoughtless, free, and bold,
Plays in the world his part ;
The childish heart I knew of old
Is now a woman's heart.

The breeze blows keen, the sun shines on,
The waves rush up the shore ;
But, ah ! but ah ! old times are gone,
And home is home no more.

It matters not. We are too fain
To nestle here below,
Until the harsh winds and the rain
Arouse us. Better so !

Dear pious hearts, may my place be
Near yours in that dark dell
Where on the Judge's lips we'll see
" Welcome ! "

But now—farewell !

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